

Conference on Soviet Economy in 1970:

Studies in Soviet Economic Growth

1. Date: Friday - Sunday, May 23 - 25, 1952
2. Place: Arden House, Harriman, N. Y.
3. Sponsors: Joint Committee of Slavic Studies of the Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies.
4. Purpose: The following statement of purpose is from the description of the project submitted to the sponsors:

The post-war years have seen a notable expansion in the numbers of serious students of the Russian economy in this country. Whereas before the war graduate concentration in Soviet economics was almost unheard of, there are now a number of major centers offering graduate training in this field, and already there are a number of students of advanced status.

The corps of workers in this field has been augmented also by the conversion of mature scholars from other specialties.

The proposed Conference, it is believed, would represent the first occasion when these scholars would be able to assemble for any length of time for the serious discussion of their specialty. Accordingly, the opportunity to meet in this way should be of more than ordinary value to the participants, particularly the younger scholars.

Needless to say, no detailed blueprint of the Soviet economy in 1970 is anticipated. The Conference would focus rather on the strategic factors in Russian economic growth, and on the appraisal of their more important implications for the long-run. But an inventory of knowledge of this sort should be illuminating from many standpoints, including not the least Russian strength; and at the same time it would serve to mark out for further research areas of ignorance on a vital theme.

It is envisaged that the proceedings of the Conference ultimately will be published.

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5. Assumptions: It is felt that even at the price of some discussion at cross purposes the participants should decide for themselves the nature of the assumptions to be made regarding domestic and international political and economic data underlying their appraisals and forecasts. At the same time, presumably all will agree that for the purposes of the Conference there is little point in elaborating for the Soviet economy in 1970 the implications of a general war taking place in the preceding interval; so this particular eventuality might just as well be passed by. Furthermore, the participants of course may wish to examine the implications of various alternative sets of assumptions in varying contexts.

6. Organization: Authors of main papers are asked to submit their essays to Professor Bergson by April 1, 1952 at the latest. These papers will then be mimeographed and distributed to the other participants.

At the conference itself, the authors of main papers should summarize rather than read their essays. While there will be designated discussants for each paper, it is hoped that other participants will also join in the discussion. To this end, all main papers will be distributed to all participants.

A length of 7500 words would seem desirable generally for the main papers. The oral summaries should not exceed 30 minutes. The designated discussants might think in terms of a 15 or 20 minute talk.

Topics of main papers

1. Conditions of Soviet Economic Development
2. National Income and Product in 1970
Capital Formation & Allocation as a Conditioning Factor
3. Prospects for the Efficiency of Investment Decisions
4. Population and Labor Force in 1970
5. Transportation Prospects
6. Resources and Industrial Potentialities
7. Trends in Industrial Labor Productivity
8. Soviet Industrial Production in 1970
9. Agricultural Production Prospects: Resources as a Conditioning Factor
10. Agricultural Production Prospects: Organization as a Conditioning Factor
11. Agricultural Production in 1970
12. Prospects for Soviet Economic Relations with the Orbit
13. The Future of East-West Trade

N.B. The foregoing topics, of course, overlap in varying degrees. From many standpoints, it is felt that this is all to the good, and accordingly contributors should not be unduly concerned to avoid aspects which may be discussed by others.

TO: Members of Conference on Soviet Economy
FROM: Abram Bergson
SUBJECT: Title of Conference

In view of the concern expressed in various quarters, including some members of the Conference, as to the possibility of misunderstanding concerning our aims, it has seemed advisable to change the title of the Conference to the following: "Soviet Economic Growth: Conditions and Perspectives." At the same time, where necessary, corresponding changes have been made in the titles of individual papers, and the new titles are shown below.

As before, of course, the concern is primarily with the long-term future. Also, insofar as it is found necessary in one or another connection to think in terms of a horizon date, the year 1970 remains the one to consider.

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